United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General yesterday ends his four-nation Asian tour, having visited Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK) and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China; says he hopes his visit to Korean peninsula contributes to better understanding Governments involved and international community.

+ Concluding first part of current session, General Assembly on Thursday approved appropriations of $2,6 billion for United Nations regular budget for 1994-1995; approved income estimates of $477 million, while net expenditure for biennium would be $2 billion.

+ Annual contributions to UNHCR surpass $1 billion for second year; that level attributed to donor confidence in UNHCR and recognition of growing world-wide refugee problems.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali yesterday ended his four-nation Asian tour in Beijing. In the course of his 10-day journey, he visited Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as well as the People's Republic of China. He said he hoped that his visit to the Korean peninsula would have contributed to a better understanding by the ROK and DPRK Governments and the international community, and that he hoped his initiative would be followed by others.

Following his arrival in Beijing on Sunday, the Secretary-General met with Chan Muhua, Vice-Chairperson of the National People's Congress, who is in charge of arrangements for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995. The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation that China was hosting the Conference.

The Secretary-General then met with Premier Li Peng. He opened the discussion by reiterating his promise to visit China, a permanent member of the Security Council, each year of his mandate. He thanked the Premier for the important support China had given the United Nations in the recently concluded operation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), as well as in providing observers currently serving in several peace-keeping operations.

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Speaking at Pyongyang airport on his departure from the DPRK on Sunday, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said that his meetings with the leadership in the DPRK and the ROK had convinced him that both Presidents wish to avoid escalation of present tensions and to solve peacefully the problems that exist between them. Both had also agreed that the goal of reunification should be achieved through a gradual process. "I am, therefore, encouraged to believe that a negotiated solution can be found, though I do not underestimate the difficulties of this after so many years of separation and distrust," he said

Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the President of the DPRK, Kim Il Sung, on Saturday. According to a United Nations spokesman, they discussed matters related to the reunification of the Korean peninsula and various foreign affairs matters, including the nuclear issue. Reference was also made to the discussions between the DPRK and the United States. The Secretary-General expressed his hope that the outcome of those talks would be positive and constructive.

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Concluding the first part of its current session, the General Assembly on Thursday approved appropriations of $2,560,200,200 for the United Nations regular budget for the 1994-1995 biennium. It took that action by approving 34 reports of its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). It approved income estimates of $477,401,700, while net expenditure for the biennium would be $2,112,798,500.

The Assembly also approved, without a vote, five other draft resolutions on the budget, by which it will appropriate: $100 million for the biennium to establish the Working Capital Fund; $25,099,000 for the International Computing Centre; and $4,000,000 for the International Civilian Mission to Haiti for the period 1 January to 31 March 1994.

In other action, the Assembly urged the international community to increase financial resource flows to Africa and to give serious consideration to convening an international conference on Africa's external indebtedness. Without a vote, it urged States to devote 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance and 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries. The Assembly urged multilateral financial institutions, as well as recipient and donor countries, to pay special attention to addressing the social impact of structural adjustment policies. It also urged United Nations bodies to integrate the priorities of the New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s in their mandates and to allocate sufficient technical and financial support to African regional economic groupings.

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Annual contributions to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have surpassed $1 billion for the second year in a row. The Fund Raising Service of the UNHCR reported that the $1 billion total was reached on Wednesday, with new contributions from Japan, Denmark and the United States. It said the organization's ability to raise that amount in two successive years reflected both donor confidence in the UNHCR as well as growing world-wide refugee problems.

The High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata, recently thanked donors for their strong support, noting that the UNHCR has "never before been so extensively involved in refugee and humanitarian action around the world". It is currently caring for more than 19 million refugees around the world, with a staff of just under 3,000 people working in 111 countries.

The leading contributors to the UNHCR for 1993 are again the United States, with $215 million during the year, and the European Community, with nearly $160 million. Japan is the third largest donor, with $101 million. The Netherlands, which ranks fourth with $88 million, nearly doubled its contributions over 1992. Other leading contributors are Sweden, the United Kingdom, France, Norway, Germany, Italy, Finland and Australia.

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